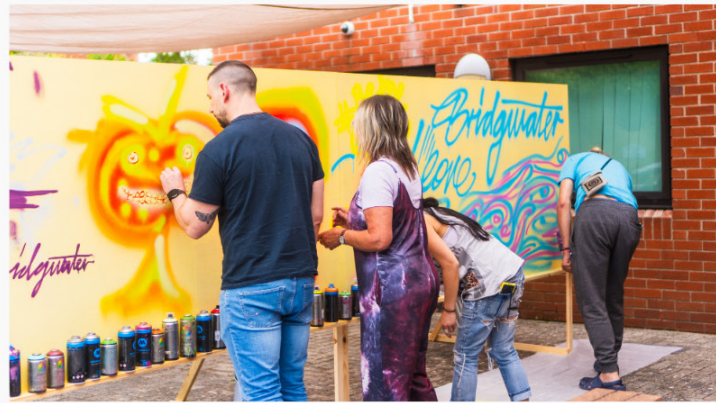


SEED YEAR IN REVIEW 2025/26



It is with a sense of both accomplishment and sadness that we look back on the wonderful things achieved by the people of Sedgemoor through over the past year and a quarter through the Seed Creative People and Places programme. 2025 was our busiest year to date with 53 active projects during the year and the largest number of different individuals actively taking part in our creative programme. Our events, activities and public artworks also reached the largest annual audience of the six and a half years of the Seed programme. Sadly, the opening quarter of 2026 was the last three months of the CPP programme as our funding from Arts Council England came to a close.

This edition of our Year in Review celebrates these final 15 months of activity. It is the culmination of an extraordinary period of hard work by our dedicated staff team, our consortium partners, trustees and of course the members of the community, particularly our sowers and growers who volunteered their time and efforts to ensure the programme reached so many people and was designed, developed and delivered not just for the people of Sedgemoor but by them.

We achieved so much of our ten-year vision for Sedgemoor in these six and a half years, and the roots for many years of ongoing activity with increased engagement in the arts across this part of Somerset have taken a firm hold. All of us at Seed would like to thank you for your ongoing interest, support and participation and we know that our combined efforts have contributed to a more creative future for us all.

Claire Tough
Consortium Chair,
Seed Sedgemoor

Over the 15 months, Seed has continued to grow its reach and impact across Sedgemoor, bringing arts and culture to more people than ever before—especially those who have not traditionally taken part. Our activity has now reached a consistent scale, with large audiences and strong participation throughout year round, rather than just in the summer peak we saw in the previous post-pandemic years.

Seed activities reached audiences between 40,000 and 70,000 people each quarter. Alongside this, with up to 1,000 people taking an actively creative role in our activities. A significant proportion of these participants were new to arts and culture. Around half or more of those surveyed said it was their first time attending a Seed activity, and many described themselves as people who rarely or never take part in the arts. In some activities this was as many as two thirds of the attenders. This shows that Seed has successfully achieved its main aim reaching people who might not otherwise engage.

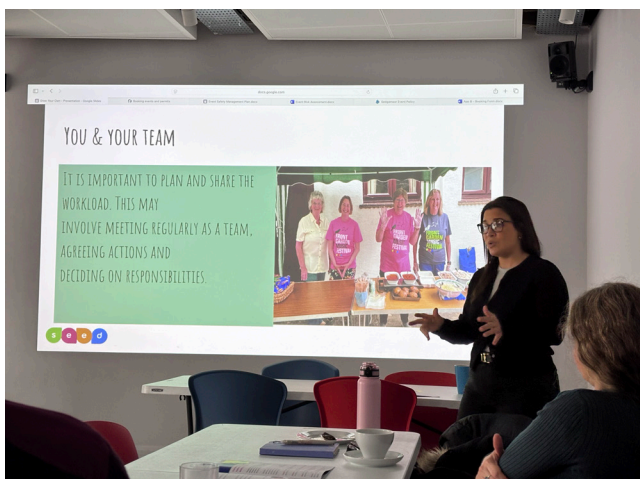
Some projects have been particularly effective in achieving this. Our partnership with the National Gallery brought high-quality artwork into public spaces through an ongoing outdoor exhibition and walking trails. These reached large numbers of people and encouraged them to engage with art in a relaxed, everyday way. The Creative Popup shop in Angel Place has also played a key role, offering a welcoming and familiar-feeling space where people can drop in, explore exhibitions and take part in activities. Around half of visitors to the Popup were experiencing Seed for the first time, making it an important gateway into the arts.

At the same time, the quality of the work Seed presented this year has remained consistently high. We focused on ensuring that high-quality creative experiences were not limited to a small number of flagship projects, by embedding aspirations to the highest possible quality across the programme. We know that we have achieved this as audience feedback has been very positive. The vast majority of our survey respondents this year

have rated their experiences with the highest choice on the scale, and the vast majority saying they feel inspired and excited about the arts after taking part.

This has been achieved by combining the skills of professional artists with the ideas and energy of local people. Activities are designed with local audiences in mind, ensuring they are both accessible and ambitious. Over time, our ongoing and repeated projects have been refined and improved based on feedback, leading to stronger outcomes and greater impact.

A key strength of the programme is the way it involves communities in shaping what happens. Local people have helped to make decisions about programming, from selecting artists and themes to designing and leading projects themselves. For example, the Sounds of Sedgemoor project was created and led by participants, who wrote and recorded their own music. Community members have also helped choose locations for artworks and contributed to the design of public murals. All of the Front Garden Music Festival locations in 2025 were programmed, managed and delivered by community groups and volunteers. This approach has built confidence and ownership, with more people moving from simply attending events to actively taking part and influencing future activity. We have supported them with ongoing skills development and information resources, including a training course and manual that will enable events of this kind to continue beyond the end of our CPP funding.



Several important lessons have been reinforced over the past year. Visibility is key—creative activity in public spaces is the most effective way to reach new audiences. Accessibility also matters, with free, local and informal opportunities helping to remove barriers. Engagement is a journey, with people often moving from observing to participating over time. It is also clear that high-quality work can be both accessible and appealing to people who are new to the arts.

Our survey data makes it clear that people in Bridgwater in particular have observed a noticeable change in the area. Arts and cultural activity is now more visible in everyday life, with activity taking place in streets, public spaces and shopping centres. People are now more likely to encounter creative work as part of their daily routines, rather than having to seek it out.

Perhaps as a result of this our audiences have become more consistent, with repeat engagement growing alongside new participation. People are more open to trying new experiences and are gaining confidence in engaging with arts and culture. At the same time, the quality and ambition of what is on offer has increased, raising expectations of what is available locally.

Rather than constantly introducing new ideas, the focus has been on refining and expanding approaches that work well. Successful models such as the Creative Popup and outdoor public activity have been developed further, while maintaining a balance between large-scale engagement and smaller participatory projects.

Our achievements this year demonstrate that it is possible to reach large and diverse audiences, to engage people who are new to the arts, and to deliver high-quality creative experiences all at the same time. Our highly successful programme also demonstrates the value of a flexible, community-led approach that has contributed significantly to making arts and culture a visible and valued part of everyday life in Sedgemoor.

How we strengthen the arts in Sedgemoor

We work to remove barriers to engagement and participation in the arts. Community members collaborate with us on creative arts activities that:

- Provide opportunities for people to **come together and create connections**
- Build at a local level through **providing new opportunities** for artists, in an area where there are few
- Encourage people to **think differently and explore new possibilities**

We work in targeted communities to 'seed' new arts activity by enabling people to shape it. We develop it in partnership with them by progressing each community through a four-stage developmental model, that results in sustainable and regenerative community-led activity on a continuing basis. We enable and encourage them to be ambitious and aspire to excellence.

Plough - We talk and listen to people, cultivating ideas in local communities. We find out what strengths can be built on and what opportunities people miss.

Sow - We commission different events and activities for everyone in the community to try.

Grow - We support those activities and events which strike a chord to get bigger, better & more ambitious.

Yield - The events and activities become sustainable and regenerating so they can continue without us.

OUR
DEVELOPMENT
PHASES

PLOUGH



WHAT
WE
DO

WE TALK TO PEOPLE
CULTIVATING IDEAS
IN THE COMMUNITY

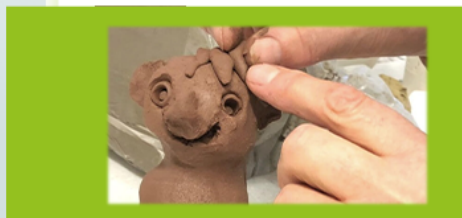
ASSET
BASED
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
PRINCIPLE

*THE COMMUNITY
DEFINES THE ISSUES &
STRENGTHS*



EXAMPLE:
FRONT
GARDEN
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

PEOPLE WANTED LIVE MUSIC IN THE COMMUNITY OUTSIDE OF PUB VENUES. LOCAL TALENT WANTED OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY



EXAMPLE:
INDIVIDUALITY
PROJECT

PEOPLE IN CHEDDAR ASPIRED TO CO-CREATE AN ANTONY GORMLEY STYLE FIELD OF FIGURES



EXAMPLE:
BLUES IN THE
PEWS

PEOPLE IN HIGHBRIDGE WANTED LIVE MUSIC IN THE TOWN BUT NOT IN THE LOCAL PUB

SOW



COMMUNITIES TRY
EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY TESTS &
REFINES POSSIBLE
SOLUTIONS



DURING LOCKDOWN WE
COMMISSIONED MUSICIANS TO
STEP OUTSIDE AND PLAY FOR
NEIGHBOURS AND PASSERS BY

GROW



WE NURTURE THEM

COMMUNITY ARE KEY
ACTORS IN DEVELOPING
& IMPLEMENTING
SOLUTIONS



SUBSEQUENT FREE OUTDOOR
EVENTS HAVE GROWN IN SCALE &
QUALITY WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY
GROUPS PLANNING & MANAGING
ALL SITES IN 2024 & 2025

YIELD



THEY BECOME
REGENERATIVE

COMMUNITY HAS TOTAL
OWNERSHIP &
CONTROL



FUTURE EVENTS WILL BE CREATED
AND DELIVERED WITHIN LOCAL
COMMUNITIES WITH LOCAL
FINANCIAL SUPPORT



ARTIST BRIDGET HEMMINGS WAS
COMMISSIONED TO LEAD FIGURE
MAKING WORKSHOPS. FIGURES
WERE EXHIBITED IN CHURCH HALL



A WALKING TRAIL IN CHEDDAR,
WORKSHOPS EXPANDED
SEDGEMOOR WIDE, 1500 FIGURES
EXHIBITED IN BRIDGWATER & HIGH-
BRIDGE, NEW ACTIVITY OF CREATIVE
WRITING WORKSHOPS ADDED,
POEMS PUBLISHED AS A BOOK



EXTENSIVE COVERAGE ON BBC, A
TOURING EXHIBITION NOW
AVAILABLE, BOOK AND WORKSHOP
PROGRAMMED AT BURNHAM ON SEA
AND HIGHBRIDGE BOOK FESTIVAL IN
SEPTEMBER



BLUES IN THE PEWS -
JAM SESSION AT THE CHURCH
WITH HOUSE BAND WAS CREATED
DRAWING AUDIENCES OF @80 PAX
AND 8-10 PARTICIPANTS EACH
MONTH



PEWFEST & HERSOUND SKILLS
WORKSHOPS ADDED, HIGH QUALITY
GUEST ARTISTS PERFORMED.
40 SESSIONS DELIVERED OVER 4
YEARS. NUMBERS GREW TO AS
HIGH AS 24 PERFORMING PARTICI-
PANTS & 138 AUDIENCE MEMBERS



SIDMOUTH JAZZ & BLUES FEST.
HOSTS BLUES IN THE PEWS
SKILLS & PERFORMANCE
SESSIONS, SONGWRITING SKILLS
WORKSHOPS FOR PARTICIPANTS,
ALBUM IN THE WORKS

PLOUGH

CREATIVE ACCELERATORS

Creative Accelerator sessions in 2025 invited local people to share ideas and shape future creative activity in their communities. These sessions supported Seed's community-led approach, ensuring that projects are developed in response to local interests and needs, while encouraging new voices to take part in shaping cultural activity.

CANNINGTON & NORTH PETHERTON

Across Cannington and North Petherton, the Creative Accelerator programme brought local residents together to share ideas, explore creativity and shape activity within their communities. Through a series of informal and welcoming sessions, people were invited to connect, reflect on what matters to them and consider how creativity could play a role in local life.

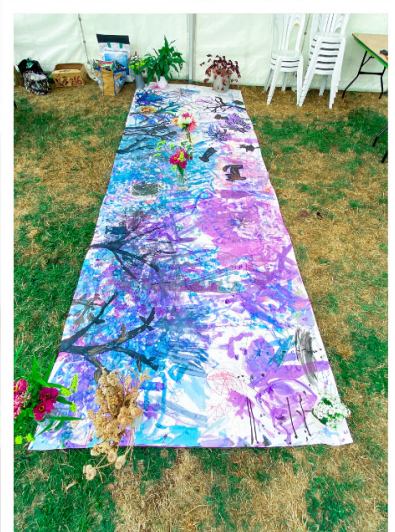
These conversations created space for new ideas to emerge, supporting participants to take the first steps towards developing their own projects and activities. The sessions encouraged collaboration, built confidence and helped people feel empowered to contribute their ideas.

By creating an open and inclusive environment across both locations, the programme fostered a sense of shared purpose and momentum, laying the groundwork for future creative activity shaped by the communities themselves

CANNINGTON VILLAGE FESTIVAL

The most popular idea that grew from the Cannington Creative Accelerators was the idea of a new community festival event – a day of free music and creative arts activities in the heart of the village. In partnership with Cannington in Bloom, Cannington Parish Council and Cannington Pantomime Society, a one day event was created and staged.

The community came together with around 300 people enjoying live music, a community drawing activity 'drawn together' facilitated by Ink Jam face painting, ice cream, sunshine and a mighty large duck race!



SOW

BLOSSOMING BRIDGWATER

Blossoming Bridgwater was a large-scale community arts project bringing together fashion, textiles, music and performance. Led by artist Chloë Haywood, the project invited local people to contribute to a multilayered skirt, each adding their own thoughts, stories and connection to Bridgwater. The work became a powerful collective artwork, celebrating identity and place through shared creativity. Through workshops and public events.

The project created opportunities for people to take part in something ambitious and collaborative, removing barriers to engagement and making creativity accessible to all.

SEASONS FASHION SHOW

Seasons was a vibrant and ambitious fashion show that brought together community creativity, performance and storytelling in a unique live experience. Building on the Blossoming Bridgwater project, the event showcased garments created with and by local people, each piece reflecting personal stories, identity and connection to place. Presented across two evenings, the show combined fashion with live music and performance, creating a dynamic and immersive atmosphere. Participants took to the stage to model the work, celebrating not only the finished pieces but the collective journey behind them. The event highlighted the power of collaboration, bringing together artists, makers and performers to create something bold and memorable.

Seasons was a powerful moment of shared pride, demonstrating what can happen when communities are supported to create at scale. It celebrated creativity in all its forms and offered a platform for voices and stories that might not otherwise be seen or heard.



FIONA CAMPBELL

ENVIRONMENTALEXHIBITIONS

In 2025, artist Fiona Campbell presented a series of immersive exhibitions at the Seed Creative Popup, bringing together sculpture, textiles and found materials to explore environmental themes. Her work invited visitors to step inside large-scale installations and reflect on nature, sustainability and the relationship between people and the natural world. Alongside the exhibitions, Fiona led free drop-in workshops, offering hands-on opportunities for participants to experiment with recycled materials and creative making.

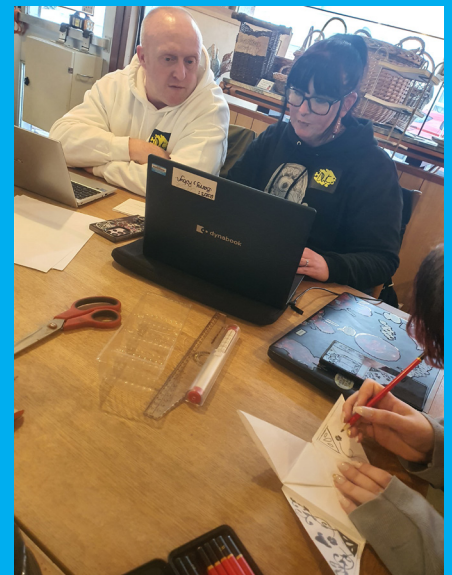


DOODLE WITH CLEDS

Doodle with Cleds offered a relaxed and welcoming creative space where drawing became a way to connect, reflect and share experiences. Blending informal doodling sessions with conversation, the project encouraged people of all abilities to take part, with no pressure and no expectation, just the chance to pick up a pen and join in.

Alongside the sessions, The Journey exhibition presented a powerful visual narrative of resilience, recovery and renewal, charting Cleds' personal story over time. Through mixed media work and a curated timeline, the exhibition explored the importance of both professional support and the human connections found within the Somerset community.

Together, the workshops and exhibition created a thoughtful and inclusive environment where creativity became a tool for expression and understanding. Whether doodling, chatting over coffee or taking part in workshops, participants were invited to slow down, connect with others and be part of a shared creative experience.



HIVE



Hive was a community-centred participatory art project inspired by the importance of pollinators and the decline of bee populations. Through a series of workshops held at the Seed Creative Popup, as well as in schools and wellbeing groups, participants created handmade textile bees using simple techniques. Each bee reflected different species found locally, combining creativity with learning about ecology and biodiversity. The individual pieces came together as part of a larger installation titled Swarm, celebrating collective making and the power of community. The installation has since visited other locations including Bridgy Gallery.

UTOPIAN CHEMISTRY

Utopian Chemistry was an interactive pop-up art experience at the Seed Creative Popup in Angel Place, inviting visitors to imagine the building blocks of a better world. At the heart of the exhibition was a “Periodic Table of a Feasible Utopia”, featuring over 100 creative elements such as love, clean energy and kindness. Visitors were encouraged to reflect on what makes a good life and contribute their own ideas by creating new elements, becoming part of a growing collective artwork. The project offered a playful and thought-provoking way to explore shared values, creativity and community imagination.



GROW

INDIVIDUALITY CREATIVE WRITING

Building on previous years of ceramic work, the Individuality Project evolved into a creative writing programme in 2025. Workshops encouraged participants to explore identity and personal stories through writing, offering a supportive space for creativity regardless of experience. The project continued Seed's focus on celebrating individuality and amplifying community voices.



INKJAM - PRINT FOLK JAMS

Print Folk Jams brought people together through relaxed, social printmaking sessions that encouraged creativity, skill sharing and experimentation. Led by artists, the sessions offered a space for participants of all abilities to explore print techniques, develop their own ideas and connect with others in a supportive environment. Whether working on individual projects or learning something new, Print Folk Jams created a welcoming community of makers, where creativity could be shared and developed collectively.



HARRIET POPHAM PRINT WORKSHOP

Bridgwater local printmaker Harriet Popham led a series of hands-on lino printing workshops at the Seed Creative Popup, offering participants the chance to explore printmaking in a relaxed and supportive environment. Designed for all experience levels, the sessions guided people through carving and printing techniques, with opportunities to create their own prints and contribute to a shared artwork.

The workshops focused on building confidence and encouraging experimentation, showing that creativity is accessible to everyone. By combining practical skill-building with a social, welcoming atmosphere, the sessions created space for people to connect, learn and take pride in making something with their own hands.



SINGING FOR THE SLIGHTLY TERRIFIED



Singing for the Slightly Terrified offered a joyful and welcoming space for anyone who loves to sing but might not always feel confident doing so. Led by Jess Cunningham, the sessions were open to all, with no pressure to perform, no need to read music and no expectation to sing alone. Songs were learned by ear in a relaxed and supportive setting, helping people find their voice and enjoy singing together.

The sessions quickly grew into a friendly and encouraging group where participants could build confidence at their own pace. Delivered across Bridgwater and Highbridge, the project created a strong sense of connection, with plenty of laughter, shared moments and a real sense of belonging.

As confidence grew, so did the ambition of the group, leading to their involvement in the Sounds of Sedgemoor recording sessions and album. From tentative first notes to recorded tracks, the journey captured the spirit of the project, showing how inclusive, welcoming spaces can help people take creative steps they might never have imagined.



CREATE THE FUTURE: IMAGING A NEW MURAL

The Bridgwater mural began as a simple idea shaped by local voices and grew into one of the town's most ambitious public artworks. A new mural celebrating the town was one of the most common suggestions put forward in our community consultations in Bridgwater since 2022. Early experiments in temporary co-created public artwork came from our earlier projects Art First and What if?.

Seed started the creation process in 2024 with a week in the Creative Popup called Create the Future. We invited residents to share ideas, explore different mural styles and reflect on what they wanted to see represented in their town through talking, drawing, making 3d objects ceramics and plasticine, and other hands-on creative activities. From these early conversations and creative explorations, a theme of "what's next" emerged, capturing a sense of optimism and a desire to look forward while staying connected to Bridgwater's identity.

An artist callout followed, with the final selection made by a panel of local residents, students, business owners and community members. Bristol-based artist Tom Sledmore was chosen for his collaborative approach, placing community involvement at the heart of the design process. Through a series of open workshops held across Bridgwater, people of all ages were invited to share stories, sketch ideas and contribute directly to the artwork.



WHAT'S NEXT? THE BRIDGWATER MURAL

These contributions were brought together into a final design for a large-scale mural stretching over 130 metres in Eastover. The finished piece reflects Bridgwater's past, present and future, combining personal stories, local references and imaginative elements shaped by those who took part. For some, this meant seeing themselves represented within the artwork, creating a strong sense of ownership and pride.

More than just a transformation of a blank wall, the mural stands as a celebration of community collaboration and creativity. It demonstrates how shared ideas can grow into something lasting, leaving a visible and meaningful mark on the town and the people who helped create it.

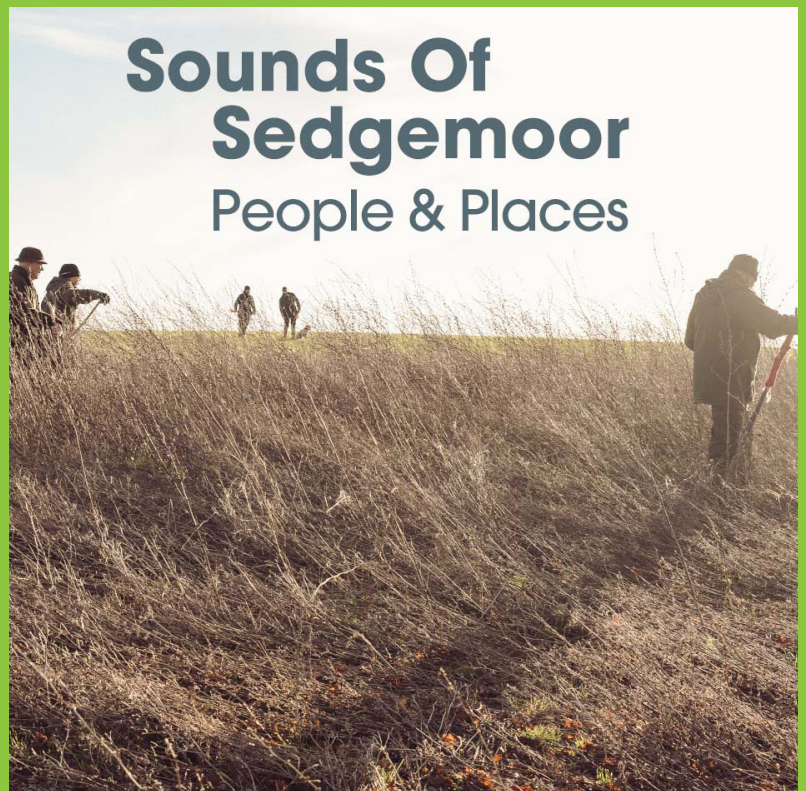




YIELD

SOUNDS OF SEDGEMOOR

Sounds of Sedgemoor is a landmark project responding to the growing artistic ambition of our many music participation groups and bringing together years of community music-making into one shared creative achievement. The album captures original songs that reflect the people, stories and spirit of Sedgemoor developed by a wide range of local artists and groups. The album was launched with a memorable concert and is available across digital streaming platforms, and on CD or vinyl, ensuring these songs can be enjoyed in multiple ways and continue to reach new audiences beyond the life of the project.



The project brought together participants in our ongoing activities including Singing for the Slightly Terrified, Eclectic Collective, Bridgwater Guitar and Bass Group, Clashmob, Jam Factory, and Blues in the Pews. Each brought their own style and voice, resulting in a rich and varied collection of music shaped by collaboration and community. Supported by professional facilitators in the songwriting and recording process, almost all participants wrote their first songs and recorded in a studio for the first time. The project celebrates what can happen when creativity is supported over time, with ideas growing into something lasting and widely shared.

The album was launched with a memorable concert and is available across digital streaming platforms, and on CD or vinyl, ensuring these songs can be enjoyed in multiple ways and continue to reach new audiences beyond the life of the project.





CLASHMOB

Clashmob is a lively, annual pop-up music event that brings the sound of The Clash to the streets of Bridgwater. Local musicians gathered again in 2025 & 2026 to perform iconic songs in unexpected public spaces, often surprising passers-by and inviting them to stop and listen.

The event celebrates the legacy of Joe Strummer and his connection to the town, while creating a joyful, shared moment of live music and community spirit. Open to players of all abilities, Clashmob has grown into a much-loved annual tradition, highlighting the power of participation, confidence building and collective performance. It is now a self-sustaining activity entirely organised by the ongoing Bridgwater Guitar and Bass group, so it will continue long beyond the Seed CPP programme.



MICRO COMMISSION - LARA PUTT

Ceramicist Lara Putt has been a familiar and much-loved part of Seed's creative programme, having delivered popular pottery workshops at the Seed Creative Popup last year. Her sessions, have consistently drawn in participants keen to try something new and experience the joy of working with clay.

In 2025, Lara was awarded a Seed micro commission to support the next step in her practice, enabling her to purchase a new potter's wheel. This investment strengthened her ability to continue delivering high-quality workshops while developing her own creative work.

Lara's warm and encouraging approach helped build confidence and made creativity feel accessible to everyone. Her work is a great example of how ongoing relationships with artists can grow, supporting both creative development and meaningful community engagement.



SEED STATS

With our six and half year programme now complete we can report the full statistical achievements across that time.

190
Projects

38,653
Participations

16,716
Individual Project
Participants

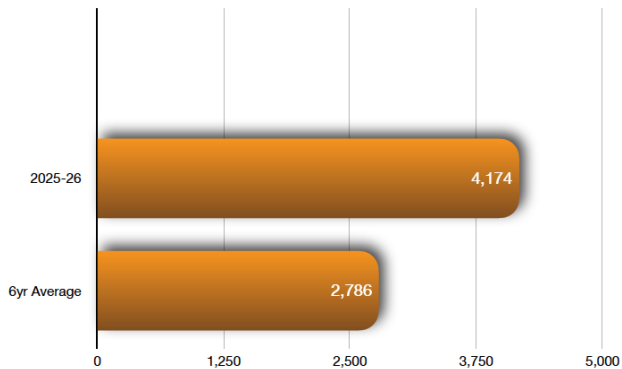
11,105
Volunteer Hours

708,487
Audience Engagements

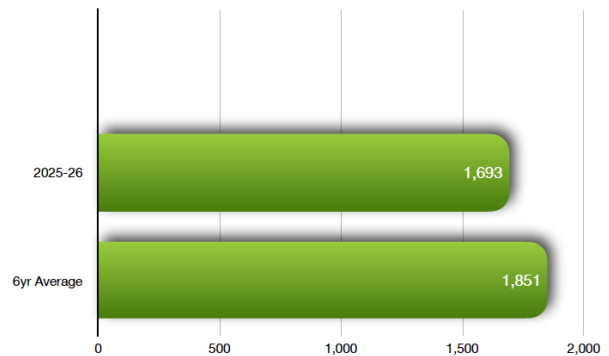
How does 2025/6 stack up?

Due to the end date of our programme extending three months into 2026, these figures are for 15 months, or 5 quarters from January 2025 until end of March 2026.

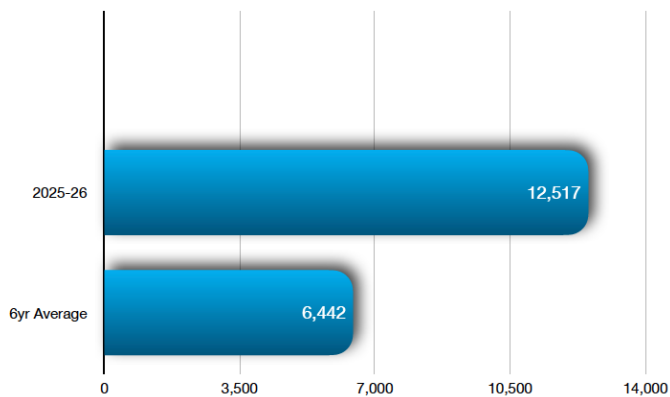
Participants



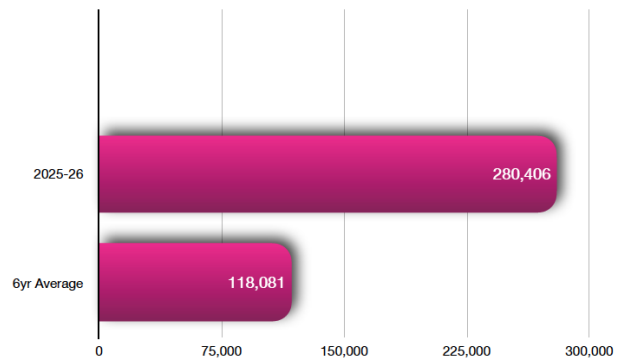
Volunteer Hours



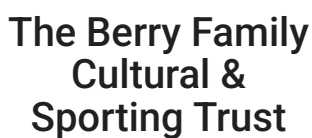
Participations



Audience Engagements



Thanks to our volunteers, funders and supporters including:



Looking back at 2025/26

Francesca Smith - Seed Chair of Trustees

The Seed team has helped thousands of people across Sedgemoor to engage in the arts in their communities, as audience members 708,487 times and 38,653 times as active participants across six and a half years in fact! From 1,400 participants shaping their individuality in clay for the Individuality Project, through thousands of people encountering public art every week, to 1,500 people taking part in the The National Gallery's Art Road Trip. I would love to list all the incredible events and projects created by and in collaboration with Seed but we have totalled 190!



We celebrated our shared music and stories through Sounds of Sedgemoor – not just as an album, but as a testament to the power of community voices. Whether it was through a youth theatre performance, the guitar and bass group, or the Burnham-on-Sea Life mosaic mural, every act of creativity strengthened the roots of what we built together.

My deepest heartfelt thanks go to Scott O'Hara, whose leadership and vision have guided Seed from day one; to Laura Hylton, whose energy and empathy have connected countless community members; to Elliott Morgan, whose words, care and creativity helped share Seed's story with the world and Phil Shepherd whose extensive links in the community were invaluable to the project. To them, and to every artist, volunteer, and partner who has made these years possible, I offer our deepest gratitude.

To all our sowers, growers and supporters: please, keep the faith. Creativity doesn't have to end, it can take root in new places. Though this chapter closes, as trustees we remain committed to doing all we can to keep Seed alive in spirit and, if possible, in form. The legacy you've helped grow will continue to bloom in homes, streets and imaginations across Sedgemoor.

Thank you for believing that everyone can be creative – and for proving it, beautifully.

With love and hope,

Frankie



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CREATIVE
AND PEOPLE
PLACES



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
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